

LIS 7480 Fall 2011 Final Project
An Analysis of the Collection in the Library of the
Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center
December 15, 2011

Introduction

This project and partnership between the staff of the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center (MIWRC) and Saint Catherine University (SCU) students enrolled in LIS 7480: *Collection Management* for the Fall 2011 semester was an assignment posed to the students of LIS 7480. After visiting the MIWRC, the class agreed to pursue the proposed assignment with the following goals:

- a. define the project or projects (including goals & outcomes),
- b. organize ourselves to complete the project(s),
- c. collectively manage the project(s) for the rest of the term,
- d. agree on assessment measures for the result(s) of our work together
- e. present final reports during the last two weeks of class
- f. create a class write-up, including (but not limited to) a description of the project, the process we used to define it, the actual work of teams and individuals, and assessment of the results.

When we, the LIS 7480 students, first approached this assignment, we were given the original document from SCU students who worked with the MIWRC in the past. After reviewing that document, we decided to take our own approach. We met with the staff of the MIWRC and interviewed them about their goals for the Center and its collection. We decided to inventory the collection and review thoroughly the intentions of the Center regarding their collection. We also determined that it would be essential to examine what the Center's library does now and who it serves, as well as have the staff of MIWRC describe their vision for the library in the future and how they will continue to serve their users.

MIWRC's Mission Statment: "To empower American Indian women and families to exercise their cultural values and integrity, and to achieve sustainable life ways, while advocating for justice and equity."

These are our impressions-- what the LIS 7480 students observed about the collection and what we learned from interviews with the MIWRC staff. In addition to our observations, we have made some suggestions for future development and organization of the collection.

Description of Collection as observed by LIS students

- The first intent of the collection is to provide materials to aid in the prevention and treatment of alcohol and drug addiction for American Indian Women and their families. The collection contains a large amount of material that supports this goal. This is the part of the collection that is tied in with their primary source of funding, so unless different sources are found this will, by necessity, continue to be a main part of the collection. The MIWRC is funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division.
- The collection also focuses on the culture and crafts of American Indians. This collection ties in with the first collection, as Jo and Beth view cultural education as an important component of increasing self esteem in individuals and greatly affect the success of their substance abuse prevention and treatment programs.
- There are a lot of original documents that detail the history of the American Indians in this geographical area including but not limited to the next item. These include articles, books, objects, photos, etc. Many of these documents are stored in the pamphlet file drawers or still in boxes, unsorted.
- MIWRC Library has a unique collection of documents related to the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA).
- There is a circulating collection of books and videos to help encourage literacy in the American Indian community, which are also available for entertainment.

Highlights of Collection

- Primary documents
- MIWRC helped in getting ICWA legislation passed
 - Center and former staff specifically mentioned in documents
- ICWA issues are relevant and ongoing
 - Could support immediate information needs
- MIRWC could be promoted through specialization of ICWA information
- Drafts of legislation, some annotated by hand
- Government documents
- Transcripts
- Local government (Hennepin County) documents and drafts
- It complements other local collections (U of M, MN Historical Society)

Questions for MIWRC to consider

- What is unique about the collection and how can rare and special collections be marketed to the public?
- MIWRC has several special collections. These could be maintained separately or integrated into the library as a whole. Which option will work best for MIWRC?
 - Separate special collection:

- Pro: Unique and valuable resources
 - Con: Time and funding
- Integrated into the library as a whole:
 - Pro: Adds value to collection as a whole
 - Con: Lost in the crowd?
- Active collection of new ICWA material?
- Active collection of local ICWA material?
- Collaborate with similar local research (see Potential Partnerships section)?

Current uses of MIWRC library

- They give presentations to help increase cultural sensitivity toward the Ojibwe, and utilize current resources such as quotations to supplement presentations.
- People use the public computers for genealogical research – 20-25 people per week mostly using the computers. Note: Indians can also access computers at the nearby Franklin Library, but there can occasionally be cultural clashes between the other patrons using the computers and the Indians.
- Their collection is used to assist the alcohol and drug abuse prevention programs the center sponsors, which are funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services Alcohol & Drug Abuse Division.
- They use the cultural resources to increase the community's knowledge of traditional crafts and culture. They view increasing the cultural knowledge of individual Indians as a preventative measure against alcohol and drug addiction.
- They share work with area Social Service Organizations which offer direct services and deal with confidential information. The other organizations send staff to workshops presented by the MIWRC.
- Their manuscript collection is frequently needed for research but difficult to use because it lacks organization.
- It is a resource for historical information on native populations in Minnesota and surrounding areas.
- It contains census information on American Indians to see how the population is distributed between rural and urban areas.
- Some programs offered by the MIWRC:
 - Rule 25 outpatient treatment program (certified classes 9-12 weeks long);
 - Healing Journey Programs –Phoenix (for women in end-stage alcoholism);
 - Efforts to extend sobriety time with arts and crafts, beading, quilting, etc.;
 - Oskinigiikwe – for girls in trouble or on verge of getting in trouble, some girls have been trafficked or deal with anger issues;
 - Family stabilization services – Indian child welfare advocate, life skills workshops, they provide housing to some families – section 8.
- The MIWRC Library Director needs access to current statistics on native populations for grants and research.
- It serves as a repository for Indian women's sex trafficking history. MIWRC has a majority of the documents. It needs to be a special protected collection.
- This collection is full of historical documents, including an original copy of Indian Child Welfare act communications, one-of-a-kind books with information about native villages and history from 1925, historical records, League of Women

voters typed documents about Native Americans, and information on the sterilization of Indian women in the 1970s.

- They (Beth) looks for trends in Indian populations, like gangs around Mille Lacs, Leech Lake, Fond du Lac, and White Earth. She did research on local gangs and gang symbols and put together a workshop to present to the reservations to educate them on gangs.
- Organize any and all information on Indian communities and colonization.
- Organize displays and outreach to share the American Indian story with the larger community – presented at different libraries.
- The downstairs is a public area with computers, the pamphlet file, and the circulating collection.
- The state mandates collecting 400 additional items per year, but there is no staff time available to enter these new items into the database.
- They can weed items at their discretion.
- They focus on tribes in the area – Dakota, Ojibwe, and Ho-Chunk.
- They appear to have two collections and will need two respective policies - Circulating and Archival.
- The MIWRC provides some direct services, including child protection, reuniting families, and helping people to find living spaces and food.
- They are working with a positive social community norms campaign. This is a different grant application to bring young people into MIWRC to do projects.
- Photographs with releases are currently used for annual reports and publicity, and some are already digitized.
- Graphics are for use in promotional materials.
- The MIWRC creates 1-2 page fact sheets (at least two per year). The content is informational, statistical, or topical (e.g. dating safety, motivational interviewing, positive community norms, or how to go about community change).
- Patrons don't always know what's available. If the staff is unable to find what is being sought that day, they contact the patron when the information is found. They track how many information requests are made via email. Most requests are done in person and are often computer/user instruction oriented as well as help with job searches, creating resumes, etc. Jo's requests are about 50/50 email and phone and often from other agencies and some from her supervisor.
- The history of MIWRC is available through the library but not easily accessible, due to the lack of efficient cataloging, and documents are still not being archived. Part of the concerns may be privacy. Each of the programs is responsible for archiving their information. The archives here are based on the resources they consult with the workshops, the fact sheets, etc. They also track the demographics of users of the collection by age, race, male/female, what subject/part of the collections are they looking at, etc. They have to track that for the grants.

Potential and/or desired uses for MIWRC library

- House a small Smithsonian exhibit.

- The Center wants to create a program around poetry readings. They would help young girls write poetry and have poetry readings and maybe look at helping them to get published through small press.
- They want to have multi-sensory learning opportunities.
- They want to become more of a Community Center. Two hours per day, they could have a volunteer create traditional crafts, such as creating a cradle board, so people can come in to learn traditional aspects of Indian culture as a way of preserving and promoting their culture and in doing this deter the use of drugs and alcohol.
- The collection could include some general powwow music for programming use, to teach young people to dance.
- They want to be a research center specializing in Indian history in Minnesota – alcoholism and drug abuse treatment and prevention.

Recommendations for Future Developments

- They will need a third collection space for protected items. In the future, they would like protective storage.
- The file collection should be digitized and then some of the files could be removed. In the future, they will need more computers.
- They want to collect oral histories. They will need to set up guidelines like the Minnesota Historical Society with permission for use by the author.
- Every workshop they do, they get information from presenters, pull together handouts, bibliographies, reading lists – this should be organized to be a resource or to use again – they could loan out programs to other groups.
- Collaboration with other organizations hasn't really happened as much as they'd like. Prairie Lands Addiction Technology Center (University of Iowa), professor at Montana State University-Bozeman. They collaborate on projects with other agencies 4 to 5 times per year. They've been working more closely with the state over the last few years. The state is more interested in creating curriculum than in putting on workshops.
- Eventually, MIWRC wants to be more self-sustaining with grants, less reliant on the state. They could potentially focus on building relationships with other organizations if this was the case.
- Ideally, the Library Director, Jo Lightfeather, would like to focus on having more culturally relevant materials. She has a bibliography based on previous extensive research on detailed aspects, such as plant dyes, construction of wigwams, more technical aspects of Ojibwe life – would like to be able to have those materials available via ILL. Jo wants to revisit these materials. Tricia, an SCU student, volunteered to check and see if Hennepin County Library has these materials available and will send them over to Franklin Library, if possible, for Jo to pick up.
- They have ProQuest available, but they don't know how to access/use it. They might have access to other databases too, but they are unsure. Perhaps we could provide a tutorial. They are also confused about Delicious (social bookmarking) that previous students created. Not quite sure what to use it for or if they want to use it.

- Many of the St. Kate's students have been grappling with who the audience is for the collection. A lot of the books about the history of various tribes are written by outsiders to educate outsiders. A recommendation might be to gather histories told by Native Americans for Native Americans.
- What is/will be the main purpose for the manuscript collection? How do they want it organized to make it easy to use?

Databases

Database - This library uses Sagebrush Info Centre which is used in most of the tribal college libraries. They could enter into the database and print a list from that.

Cataloging

- Items need to be cataloged.
- Items that reference MIWRC should be cataloged with MIWRC as a tag line for searchability.
- Reorganizing is a must.

Potential partnerships

- Area public library partnerships could be beneficial for collaboration on displays. Additionally, the MIWRC staff should keep in mind that there is no need to replicate what other libraries have, especially due to limited space. It would be beneficial to become familiar with the collections of local area libraries.
- Inter-library loan. Perhaps it won't be feasible to do an official ILL, but maybe it could be possible to develop more informal agreements with local libraries.
- Other area organizations that work with cultures that may have commonalities, shared types of experiences, and also what they have and what they do with their material. Especially other culture preserving collections.
 - For example, Moorhead has a Hispanic Cultural Center, Centro Cultural. They have been in business for many years. There are probably other cultural organizations that have a history and policies that we could connect to and learn from.
- SCU LIS students. Future classes may be able to draw off of the work of the LaPlante/Peifer report and off of this class's work and do additional projects to help in the student's education and also to further the goals of the MIWRC library.
- Minitex: <http://www.minitex.umn.edu/About/Criteria.aspx>. It is state-funded, and could allow you to participate in Inter-Library Loan if you decide to do that in the future. Minitex participation requires a bibliographically organized collection and a searchable catalog, but this could be a goal toward which to work.
- Book clubs could meet in the MIWRC library, it would be useful programming in that it draws an audience into the space and also may help to develop a community for its users.

- Museums could potentially loan out artifacts to be put on display in the MIWRC library space as exhibits.
- American Indian Health (americanindianhealth.nlm.nih.gov/resources.html) and other Government agencies specific to the Indian culture. Information can be found on websites and they often will provide brochures and pamphlets for little to no cost for non-profit organizations. Resources like these might be helpful in cases of collection development as well as networking and developing potential partnerships.

Guidelines for creating a collection development policy

It would be beneficial for MIWRC to have a formal collection development policy. It would give a clear and focused view of how the MIWRC staff would like the collection to develop and evolve. Points to consider:

- Decide on the purpose of your collections and identify the users. Include the mission statement of the organization.
 - Explain the purpose of the collection(s) within the context of the mission.
- Choose focus of the collection.
- Define your goals and parameters of the collection.
- Include a statement on Intellectual Freedom and free access (many collection development policies contain this).
- Balance historical (sometimes very negative) materials with newer, more self-affirming work. The older materials can be the archive, for example, and the active collection can be the newer materials.
- Include general principles of collection development.
- Outline who is responsible for development of the collection.
- Explain how the collection will be maintained.

Here is an example from another Collection Development Policy:

- A. General Criteria
 - To build a collection of merit, materials are evaluated according to one or more of the following criteria. An item need not meet all of these criteria in order to be added to the collection:
 - Customer interest or demand
 - Contemporary significance
 - Timeliness
 - Authority, reputation or qualifications of the author, artist, publisher or producer
 - Suitability of subject and style for the intended audience
 - Attention of critics, reviewers, media and the public
 - Suitability of format for the content and for library use
 - Relationship to existing collections and other material available on the subject
 - B. Selection of Materials

- Sources for selection decisions include, among others, user requests or recommendations, publisher or vendor catalogs, advertisements, and published reviews. Librarians use their subject knowledge and expertise in combination with accepted standards to select and evaluate collection items. Gifts and purchases are selected using the same criteria. An item need not meet all criteria to be selected.
- C. Maintenance and Evaluation of Materials
 - Condition, content, inherent value, timeliness, and use are the primary criteria used to determine the retention of materials in the collection. The library also removes worn, damaged, and obsolete materials that cannot be repaired and are not longer usable. As demand declines, the library selectively removes multiple copies, making exceptions for areas of special importance to the overall collection. An item that is damaged or lost is replaced if it is deemed useful and is still available for purchase.

(Carver County Collection Development Policy, 2011)

To maintain collection quality, MIWRC will also need a weeding plan (periodically get rid of items that are no longer useful or relevant to the collection):

- Inventory the current collection, and determine which items do not fit. Considering the limitations of space and staff time, serious consideration needs to be given to this area of collection development. In deciding which items to exclude from the collection you could consider:
 - Items not intricately connected to mission or main collection goals.
 - Items that are available to patrons in other collections (e.g. public libraries).
 - Old and worn out items that are available through alternate formats (databases).
 - Any items available through electronic formats.
 - Items that are out of date or worn and not of historical importance.

MIWRC has expressed an interest in becoming an archive for historical documents concerning the lives and experiences of Indians in Minnesota and surrounding areas. A plan should be created to construct a space with storage units for the preservation of archival documents (funding could be available for this). The items to be stored need to be identified, electronically imaged and cataloged.

Because the MIWRC collection consists primarily of donations, they should include language regarding donations (what is accepted and what is not) in the Collection Development Policy.

- MIWRC should develop a policy detailing what items they are willing to accept as donations and the criterion that they will use to assess whether donations will be added to the collection. It is very important to detail the rights of the Center in determining the end location of a donation to avoid

disgruntled patrons. Our suggestion is that once items are donated they are the property of the MIWRC and you can decide how the items will be used. You might include them in the collection or you might decide to move them elsewhere. It helps to create a list of “Desirable Donations” so community members know what you might want.

Priorities for Collection Development at MIWRC

These are the priorities by which we suggest the MIWRC could organize its collections:

- Pamphlet file
- Incoming files/new files to the digital/digitized collection
- Manuscript files
- Decide what the purpose of your browsing public collection of books is and organize it so items can be found.

Alternate funding options

- SCU students believe there could be money available to you through grant opportunities in areas such as literacy or cultural preservation in addition to your current funds.
- Additionally, the MIWRC staff could work together with other organizations to generate funds.

Short-term volunteer projects

- You can break down big projects you want to do into smaller, manageable projects that volunteers can complete in a day/week/etc. Our suggestion is that you look at all your large projects and break them down into pieces (e.g. scan “this author’s” articles into the database). If you can break the big projects into little projects, volunteers with direction can chip away at the work load.
- A suggested project for a volunteer and/or a practicum project would be to work with Jo on the manuscript collection. Browse through each file drawer and check every file folder to determine what is in the folder and what the value - dollar, knowledge or other - might be. The next step would be to determine if updated articles can be found using available journal databases. Databases can be through the public library or an academic institution.
 - As the files are evaluated, it would be a good time to rearrange as they go. Rather than emptying out each file cabinet - work one cabinet at a time and move files as necessary to be sure all files are in an order that makes sense for the Center and their priorities.
- Work with SCU students enrolled in the Reference course to develop pathfinders for MIWRC materials.
- Figure out potential links to enter in the catalog record independent of any cataloging system. That is: what do we want the system to be able to find and retrieve in addition to the standard bibliographic criteria?

- It might be worth investigating other “similar” organizations that have done something similar to see if any of their processes and/or policies or use of resources—from funding sources to digitization to public access—could be replicated by MIWRC.

Resources for future collection development

- Debbie Reese’s blog, American Indians in Children’s Literature: “American Indians in Children’s Literature (AICL) provides critical perspectives and analysis of indigenous peoples in children’s and young adult books, the school curriculum, popular culture, and society”: <http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/>
- Publishers who publish works by native authors/ about native tribes/cultures/etc. Have the publishers send to MIWRC their lists of what they’re going to publish each year.
- American Indian Library Association
- Collecting oral histories
- Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums resources page, especially the "Protocols for Native American Archival Material" as well as "Pathways to Excellence"
- Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, & Museums: “ATALM is a national non-profit organization that maintains a network of support for indigenous programs, provides culturally relevant programming and services, encourages collaboration among tribal and non-tribal cultural institutions, and articulates contemporary issues related to developing and sustaining the cultural sovereignty of Native Nations.” <http://www.atalm.org/node/52>
- American Indian Library Association Resources: “The American Indian Library Association, an affiliate of the American Library Association, is a membership action group that addresses the library-related needs of American Indians and Alaska Natives. AILA holds business meetings twice a year in conjunction with the American Library Association and publishes the American Indian Libraries Newsletter semi-annually.” <http://www.ailanet.org/other/index.htm>
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- There's also an article by the same author in this book: Fenner, A. (2004). *Selecting materials for library collections*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Information Press
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- Link to Criteria for Minitex (Inter Library Loan): <http://www.minitex.umn.edu/About/Criteria.aspx>
- Candice La Plante and Lindsay Peifer's list of potential service learning projects for future groups: <http://lis7480miwrc.wikispaces.com/file/view/LaPlante+Peifer+MIWRC+Service+Learning+Project.pdf/285759668/LaPlante%20Peifer%20MIWRC%20Service%20Learning%20Project.pdf>
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Conclusion

The MIWRC has a wealth of valuable materials in their extensive collections. Developing a collection that is easily accessible and searchable will be a challenge, but by breaking down the projects into manageable steps, a significant amount of work could be accomplished by volunteers (see Short-Term Volunteer Projects section). We see many positive possibilities, including a continued partnership between the MIWRC and SCU students in the LIS program.